

"BARTLEBY": AN INTERTEXTUAL MUSIC DRAMA

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ABSTRACT
BARTLEBY: AN INTERTEXTUAL MUSIC DRAMA
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Herman Melville's *Bartleby the Scrivener* was published in 1853. A fictional Law Office located at "No. ___ Wall Street" is the setting for Melville's tale of a nameless lawyer narrator who becomes increasingly despondent over his copyist employee Bartleby's constant passive refusal: "I prefer not to." This calls into question, who is Bartleby? My aim is to answer this question by appropriating meaning to Bartleby's ambiguous behavior via the expressive emergent properties of music and the disseminative power of language. In my adaptation of the story, Bartleby, who is nearly mute in the novella, sings the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Shakespeare, and William Blake in response to the uncomprehending inquiries of his employer. This leads to my discussion of the expressive logic of my integration of specific texts into Melville's original story followed by an analytical discussion of the musical language of *Bartleby* and its concomitant musical form.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Bartleby, the Scrivener: a Story of Wall Street” is a long short story, or novella, by the American novelist Herman Melville (1819–1891). The tale chronicles the effect of an employee's refusal to fulfill the requirements of his employment. I was struck by the remarkable psychological complexities of this story. I very much wanted to represent this psychological drama in musical form, stripped down to its essentials. In order to explain my musical and dramatic approach, its necessary first to confront the literary aspect of the novella. Since I composed/compiled the libretto myself, I will go into great detail about its composition. I consider the text—even spoken text—as an intrinsic musical aspect of the work.

“Bartleby, the Scrivener” first appeared anonymously in two parts in the November and December 1853 editions of *Putnam's Magazine*. The title character, Bartleby, is hired as a scrivener (hand copyist) and the narrative revolves around the lawyer's reactions to Bartleby's behavior. Bartleby gradually and mysteriously ceases to function in the capacity for which he was hired. The reason for Bartleby's withdrawal is never revealed, although the lawyer believes it may have had something to do with a previous position that Bartleby may have held in the dead letter office of the U.S. Post Office.

The novella is one of the most complex stories written by Melville, there is little agreement among critics as to how it should be interpreted. Stanley Brodwin notes that within a "stratum of psychological and metaphysical ambiguity" (175) critics have interpreted Bartleby in symbolic and existential terms. In "Eros and Thanatos in 'Bartleby'," Billy Ted suggests that "Bartleby abandons himself to a suicide of the will

and dies as a martyr to the futility of existence." (21) Nancy Roundy interprets Bartleby as "belong[ing] to the narrator; he is the narrator's death in life, the reminder of the innate and incurable disorder which defines his own existence." (34) In a similar vein, Stanley Brodwin observes that "In any study of *Bartleby the Scrivener*—indeed, with most of Melville's work—a good place to start is with the pervasive sense of death and its accompanying images of spiritual crisis that inform the text." (174)

When Bartleby says "I prefer not to," he really means "I will not." Inevitably, the reader is left to question who Bartleby is and why it is that he "prefer[s] not to" fulfill his tasks. It seems evident that the central question raised by Melville's novella is why in fact Bartleby "prefers not to." Moreover, when considering the scope of Bartleby's statements: "I would prefer to be left alone here" (128), "I have given up copying" (130), "I would prefer not to quit you" (133), "I know you" (141), "I know where I am" (141), "Do you not see the reason for yourself?" (129), it appears as if he is defending a wholly interior world. What is it about Bartleby that causes the lawyer to experience the emotions of "fraternal melancholy?" (125); a "pure melancholy and sincerest pity...that merge into fear, that pity into repulsion" (126) while simultaneously feeling "never so private as when [he] knows [Bartleby] is there?" (135) What hidden depth does Bartleby possess that causes the lawyer to conclude, "it was his soul that suffered, and his soul I could not reach?" (126)

My interpretive stance is that Bartleby's silence is an expression of individual will: a will whose preference "not to" reflects quiet desperation and whose presence causes the lawyer to "penetrate to the predestined purpose of [the lawyer's] life" (135). A conventional approach would be to let Bartleby speak his few lines, while the Lawyer

sings at length. This approach would regard Bartleby as a "cypher" who only takes on meaning in relation to the reaction of the other characters. Thus to regard Bartleby as a cypher seems to me insufficient. It is precisely Bartleby's force-full presence that signals the substance of his character. I chose instead to invert the "cypher" approach and bestow a singing voice to Bartleby and let the others speak. The others, in turn, act as a Greek chorus, who comment on an inscrutable situation.

In order to give Bartleby his own voice I integrate the work of other authors into Bartleby, with the purpose of expanding Melville's title character. The borrowed material provides Bartleby with a personal history comprised of emotional connections to people, places and events. Each inclusion of an outside text functions to express specific aspects of Bartleby's humanity. The words of William Shakespeare give Bartleby an emotional past and history. The words of William Blake offer Bartleby a metaphysical life perspective. The words of Ralph Waldo Emerson grant Bartleby intentionality and a tangible connection to the world. Bartleby's expanded voice inverts Melville's ending. Exemplified by his statement, "I prefer not to," I chose for Bartleby to transcend his existential crisis. In Bartleby, rather than "abandoned himself to a suicide of the will," (Brodwin 174) Bartleby chooses to see the infinite in everything and live—with a new conception of life—a life that surrenders to the authority of love as one's guiding principle.

I set myself the challenge of embodying this conception in music. To do so, I limited the choice of scenes to those that are intrinsic to the dramatic confrontation of Bartleby and the Lawyer, I reduced the music to self-contained and intimate gestures—both to reflect Bartleby's reticence and to contrast with the Lawyer's more verbose

character—and, as a mediating element, I chose the string quartet's consolidated expressiveness the choice of which afforded me the opportunity to create an intimate musical world.

CHAPTER 2

MUSIC ANALYSIS

The shape of Bartleby is the result of a series of contrasting sections. Sonorities throughout the music refer to each other by pitch centers or by chromatic inflection. The tonality within these sections is primarily diatonic but not clearly tonal. Each section has harmonic progression yet does not fulfill the implied progression and resolution. Thus, sections are heard as tonal fragments in coexistence with contrasting sections of greater ambiguity.

Tonal sections are juxtaposed with tonally ambiguous sections consisting of thematic textural progressions. Furthermore, these sections mutually coexist with those of tonal ambiguity, into which the tonal implications are subsumed. Their coexistence confirms their independence. Tonally ambiguous sections have distinct thematic profiles: a unifying idea. Figure 1, on the following page, contains a reduction of the prelude. I will refer to this music throughout the following discussion.

The image displays a musical score for the Prelude from Bartleby, arranged in five systems. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The first system begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 6/8 time signature. It features a melodic line in the treble and a supporting bass line. The second system continues the piece, showing a change in the bass line's texture. The third system, starting at measure 13, introduces a 2/4 time signature and features a more rhythmic, chordal texture in both hands. The fourth system, starting at measure 22, is characterized by a complex, repetitive rhythmic pattern in the treble hand, often marked with a '3' for a triplet, while the bass line provides a steady accompaniment. The fifth system, starting at measure 26, returns to a more melodic and harmonic style, with a clear rhythmic pulse in the bass line.

Figure 1. *Bartleby*, Prelude

The harmonic language of the prelude is a prototype of the music of *Bartleby*. "Give All," the concluding aria, marks the emergence of tonality from its implications in the prelude. The prelude begins with the harmonic statement G# F# A B C C#. The music's initiating sonority is generated from the diatonic collection E F# G# A C# [0 3 5 7 8]. Generated from this, measures 3-6 consist of a progression of quartal harmonies consisting of an encapsulated fourth within a stack of fifths: F# C# B A F# C#. This harmony and its transpositions occur throughout the prelude and form the basis of harmonic referents throughout the work. The ambiguity spanning measures 1-6 is brought into relief by a series of harmonic progressions. An example is measure 7 where an F# minor tonic-dominant-tonic progression occurs. This progression is repeated in fragmentary forms in measure 24-25, 26-27 and repeats transposed to A major in measures 13-14, 15-16, and in measure 28.

The musical score for measures 1-6 is presented in a four-staff format. The top staff is Violin 1, the second is Violin 2, the third is Viola, and the bottom is Cello. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8. The music begins with a tremolo in the first measure. The harmonic structure is characterized by quartal harmonies. Dynamic markings include *pp* (pianissimo), *sf* (sforzando), and *ppp* (pianississimo). Performance instructions like *sul pont.* and *ord.* are also present. The score shows a progression of chords across the measures, with some notes tied between measures.

Figure 2. Measures 1-6

Figures 3 and 4 illustrate a combination of musical elements in the prelude. Figure 3 is an excerpt from the concluding aria, illustrating the emergence of tonality from its implications in the prelude. In figure 4, the sixteenth note pattern played by the cello and viola is foreshadowed in the arpeggio in measures 22 and 23 of the prelude. Measure 116 contains the diatonic subset [0 2 5 7] D E F# A and recurrent quartal harmonies throughout the music.

The musical score for the excerpt from Bartleby, "Give All" (measures 276-280), is presented in five staves. The instruments are I (Trumpet I), II (Trumpet II), Vla. (Viola), Vc. (Cello), and Bartleby (Soprano). The key signature has one flat (B-flat major/D minor), and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes dynamic markings: *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte) for the instrumental parts, and *f* (forte) for the vocal part. The lyrics are: "The gods a-rrive But it is a God Knows its own path And the out-lets of the sky." The vocal line features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 280.

Figure 3. Bartleby, "Give All" Excerpt

117

I *mp* *pp*

II *pp* *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

Bartleby 117

times's waste ____ Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow ____ for preecious friends

Figure 4. Measures 117- 121

Textural structures in the delineation of form are sharply distinguished strata of articulated layers. A thematic texture contains distinctive projective elements that govern the music's trajectory. The expressive progression in the textural structure establishes an anticipatory atmosphere. The prelude's opening music is an example and gives the impression of having emerged from silence. Spanning mm. 1-7 is a distinct stratum of articulated interwoven layers of increasing and decreasing intensity, as a result of sharply contrasted dynamics. Figure 5 charts the stratum's dynamic-articulative emphases (circled) and its cumulative melodic shape.

The image displays a musical score for four instruments: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Cello. The score is written in 6/8 time and features several dynamic markings and articulation instructions. Key elements include:

- Violin 1:** Starts with a *pp* dynamic and *sul pont.* instruction. A circled chord is marked *sf*. The piece concludes with a *ppp* dynamic.
- Violin 2:** Also begins with *pp* and *sul pont.*. A circled chord is marked *pp ord.* and *sf*. The piece concludes with a *ppp* dynamic.
- Viola:** Starts with *pp*. A circled chord is marked *sf*. The piece concludes with a *ppp* dynamic.
- Cello:** Starts with *pp*. A circled chord is marked *sf*. The piece concludes with a *ppp* dynamic.

Dashed lines connect the circled chords across the staves, indicating harmonic relationships. The score uses various dynamic markings: *pp* (pianissimo), *ppp* (pianississimo), *sf* (sforzando), and *ord.* (ordine).

Figure 5. Texture Stratum

In summary, the harmonic language of the prelude is a prototype of the music of Bartleby, in which incipient quartal harmonies exist within distinct texture structures. Tonal sections mutually coexist with sections of tonal ambiguity and by way of interpolation the harmonic elements unify the work in conjunction with the aforementioned recurrent thematic progressions.

CHAPTER 3
MELVILLE'S BARTLEBY

Bartleby, the title character of Melville's story (set on Wall Street in New York City), Bartleby, is hired by a nameless lawyer as a scrivener, whose job is to copy out legal documents. In time, Bartleby refuses to do anything at all and simply stares vacantly at the wall. Finally, Bartleby is carried off to prison, where he starves himself to death. Melville provides an ambiguous end to the story in which the lawyer tells of a "vague report" he heard that Bartleby's "pallid hopelessness" was the result of a position he held in the dead letter office of the U.S. Post Office (144). Thus, Melville does not provide the reader with a thematic resolution, only the anti-climactic statement "Ah, Bartleby! Ah, humanity!"—a statement from which one can only draw inferences. Approaching the narrative from a rhetorical perspective may replace the reproach of the enigmatic with the fulfilling resonance of insight. The lawyer spends hours in internal debate over what to do about Bartleby. Melville's use of language in the depiction of the lawyer's ruminations and on the language of the dialogue between him and Bartleby suggests a classical rhetorical framework. When Bartleby says "I prefer not to," he really means "I will not." The narrator's failed negotiation with Bartleby's unyielding will comprises a rhetorical elenchus further proved by the narrator's eventual state of aporia—the departure point for my version of the story of Bartleby.¹ In terms of rhetoric, this elenchus encourages a level of self-realization through dialectical questioning that produces doubt—thereby revealing

¹ Elenchus is an argumentative procedure revealing that each side is true by means of equally plausible yet inconsistent premises. Aporia is the arrival at an impasse. See Lanham (1991)

inconsistencies in a person's thought, argument, or philosophy. Referring back to the narrative of "Bartleby" the title character causes the lawyer to doubt the meaning and morality of his own life,

Gradually I slid into the persuasion that these troubles of mine touching the scrivener, had been all predestinated from eternity, and Bartleby was billeted upon me for some mysterious purpose of an all-wise Providence, which it was not for a mere mortal like me to fathom. Yes, Bartleby, stay there behind your screen, thought I; I shall persecute you no more; you are harmless and noiseless as any of these old chairs; in short, I never feel so private as when I know you are here. At least I see it, I feel it; I penetrate to the predestinated purpose of my life. I am content. Others may have loftier parts to enact; but my mission in this world, Bartleby, is to furnish you with office-room for such period as you may see fit to remain. (Melville 135)

The lawyer's state of aporia, his state of being perplexed over his 'Bartleby' situation, is actualized in the following verbal exchange,

Lawyer. I am not going to ask you to do anything you would prefer not to do. I simply wish to speak with you. Will you tell me, Bartleby, when you were born?

Bartleby. I would prefer not to.

Lawyer. Will you tell me anything about yourself?

Bartleby. I am billeted upon you for the purpose of an all wise Providence.

Seen above, Bartleby speaking the lawyer's thoughts, "and Bartleby was billeted upon me for some mysterious purpose of an all-wise Providence" (135), increases the dramatic tension between the contrasted psychological worlds constituting *Bartleby's* narrative. To further heighten the drama of Melville's tale, I insert a rhetorical apotheosis. In my piece, Bartleby's apotheosis is fully realized in his spoken words at the end of the piece, "I know where I am." And, since it crowns the end of a large-scale work, the apotheosis functions as a peroration. This conclusion was often an impassioned summary, not simply

a review of previous arguments. (peroration is the last part of the six-part classical oration: Lanham 114)

Jeffrey Weinstock suggests, "Bartleby [the Scrivener] is about the faculty of vision and seeing beyond or beneath the surface of things" (7). This aspect of Melville's story is encapsulated in the peroration of Bartleby. A dramatic pivot occurs in measure 254. The narrator asks Bartleby why he has given up copying: to which Bartleby responds. "Do you not see the reason for yourself?" Bartleby's rhetorical question, reiterating the importance of the faculty of sight, facilitates the work's apotheosis—give all to love; obey thy heart. It is at this juncture in the music's narrative that Bartleby's purpose of an all wise Providence is fully realized: to convey the message that one's dedication to the path of love results in personal freedom manifested in the ability to see the world in a grain of sand, and a heaven in a wild flower and in the ability to hold infinity in the palm of your hand, and eternity in an hour. Figure 1, to which I will refer on the following page, presents in tabular form an outline of the emplotment of the narrative. Row 2 shows the rhetorical dramatic context of the narrative outlined in row 1.

Mm. 1-31	32-81	82-107	108-128	129-21	216-240	241-255	256-310	311- 332
Prelude	monologue	dialogue	sung	dialogue	sung	dialogue	sung	dialogue
Exordium		Elenchus				Aporia	Apotheosis	
							Peroration	

Figure 6. Narrative Emplotment

The pacing of *Bartleby* is similar to that of Melville's, narrator, the Lawyer, who slowly unfolds the events of the story illustrated in row 2. The lawyer's inner monologue takes the form of an Exordium (hinted at in the work's title of melodrama). Indeed, the Elenchus (mm. 82-240) reflects Melville's pacing, which encapsulates the lawyer's escalated ruminations and brief interaction with the office clerks. As a result of the incorporated intertexts, my version of Bartleby's imprisonment, decline, and death, occurs in measures 241-332 and approximates Melville's pacing and telescoping of events. The following chapter details my incorporation of the intertexts.

CHAPTER 4

INTERTEXT AND NARRATIVE

As theoretical concept, the term intertextuality entered into academic discourse in the writings of Julie Kristeva. She introduced the term intertextuality in her writings in the field of literary theory. Marko Juvan's *History and Poetics of Intertextuality* presents a chronology of the terms inception:

It was Julia Kristeva who, between 1966 and 1974, invented, defined, and launched the notion of *intertextualité* in semiotic theory and literary studies with her essays in the journals *Tel Quel* and *Critique*, and in the monographs *Séméiotiké Recherches pour une sémanalyse* of 1969, *Le Texte du roman* of 1970, and *La Révolution du langage poétique*, published in 1974. More precisely, she introduced the term in her essay on Mikhail Bakhtin and dialogue (“*Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman*”), which grew out of her presentations in Barthes’s seminar in 1966. The essay was published in April 1967 in the *journal Critique*. (Juvan 96)

The conceptual framework for her theory relies on the fields of semiotics, comparative literature, and linguistics (Juvan 11). For my purposes, the term denotes the study of the interrelations of all literary texts with other works within a socio-historic context.

The term 'inter-textual' applies here in the sense that I integrate the work of other authors into my musical adaptation of a pre-existing autonomous text: Melville’s “Bartleby.” Therefore, for my purposes, the term 'inter-textual' means the presence of borrowed texts (inter-texts) within the primary text (Bartleby). The inter-texts form part of the dialogue between Bartleby and his employer and part of Bartleby's sung soliloquy. The libretto of Bartleby contains five inter-textual sources: William Shakespeare's Sonnets 29 and 30, Ralph Waldo Emerson's “Give All to Love,” William Blake's “Auguries of Innocence” and Melissa Pausina's "Sonnet No. 1." The following

pages contain a textual chart of the these source works (poems) as they appear as sung passages in the musical drama. Boldface type indicates borrowed portions, then a brief discussion of the text's origin and original meaning, followed by an explanation of the inter-text's significance within the libretto.

SONNET 30 William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

**When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow, 5
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight:**
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored and sorrows end

William Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets from 1592 to 1598. They were published in 1609 by Thomas Thorpe under the title "Shake-speares sonnets" (Greenblatt 232). Shakespeare's Sonnet 30 has a typical structure of three quatrains, each having its own independent rhyme scheme rhyming every other line and ending with a rhymed couplet. The first quatrain presents someone who, upon reflection, in "silent thought," disappointedly thinks of not having attained what he sought and who grieves with the strength of "old woes" for his wasted time, and who now seeks what he "lack[s]." In the second quatrain, the speaker laments his "precious friends," who "hid in death's dateless night" and, with the strength of past sorrows freshly felt, further grieves the loss of friends. The expression of grief is reiterated in the third quatrain. In the ending couplet,

his grieving is alleviated by the joy of remembering a dear friend.

GIVE ALL TO LOVE Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882)

**Give all to love;
Obey thy heart;
Friends, Kindred, days,
Estate, good-fame,
Plans, credit and the Muse,—
Nothing refuse. 6**
'T is a brave master;
Let it have scope:
Follow it utterly,
Hope beyond hope:
High and more high
It dives into noon,
With wing unspent,
Untold intent; 14
**But it is a god,
Knows it's own path
And the outlets of the sky.**
It was never for the mean;
It requireth courage stout.
Souls above doubt,
Valor unbending,
It will reward,—
They shall return 23
More than they were,
And ever ascending.
Leave all for Love; 26
**Yet, hear me, yet,
One word more thy heart behoved.
One pulse more of firm endeavor,—
Keep the to-day,
To-morrow, forever, 30**
Free as an Arab
Of thy beloved.
Cling with life to the maid;
But when the surprise,
First vague shadow of surmise
Flits across her bosom young,
Of a joy apart from thee,
Free be she, fancy-free;
Nor thou detain her vesture's hem,
Nor the palest rose she flung
From her summer diadem.

Though thy loved her as thyself,
As a self of purer clay,
Though her parting dims the day,
Stealing grace from all alive;
Heartily know, 46
When half-gods go,
The gods arrive.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82) was an American essayist, poet and philosopher.

Central to his writings is his core belief that enlightenment is achieved through autonomy, and empowered by the ability to experience God intuitively. In the following excerpt from his essay "The Over-soul," he explains this concept.

When we have broken our god of tradition, and ceased from our god of rhetoric, then may God fire the hearts with his presence. It is the doubling of the heart itself, nay, the infinite enlargement of the heart with a power of growth to a new infinity on every side. It inspires in man an infallible trust. He has not the conviction, but the sight that the best is true, and may in that thought easily dismiss all particular uncertainties and fears, and adjourn to the sure revelation of time, the solution of his private riddles. (Emerson 199)

In his essay "Self-Reliance", he expounds his concept of God in relation to man.

The height, the deity of man is, to be self-sustained, to need no gift, no foreign force. Everything real is self-existent. Everything divine shares the self-existence of Deity. All that you call the world is the shadow of that substance which you are, the perpetual creation of the power of thought, of those that are dependent and of those that are independent of your will. (Emerson 100)

Emerson's first volume of poetry contains the poem "Give All to Love," an outline of his metaphysics in verse. He explains that "all" encompasses the entire reality of an individual's experiences: relationships with friends and relatives, the turn of events, ownership of property, recognition and renown, plans for the future, and encouraging sources of inspiration. In the six-stanza poem, Emerson connects the finite cycles of

natural order with the infinite eternal order through individual feelings and experiences that are governed by love. The second stanza begins with the personification of love as a leader and a master, who guides the individual on an ascending course in all relationships. The “path” represents both the natural and the spiritual journey of an individual, enriched by wise choices and rewarding experiences. Line 9 contains a declaration that love functions as the supreme authority, “utterly” controlling the choices of an individual; as a result, this individual’s life expands in “scope.” He asserts the authority of love by equating it with the infinite essence of God, who “Knows its own path” and the “outlets of the sky.” Love is “a god” and a creator who is eternal and infinite and whose presence manifests individual experiences.

In the third stanza, Emerson describes the character of the individual who is willing to give all to love, and suggests that such giving requires "courage" from "souls above doubt." He elaborates that in order to reap the benefit from following Love's path of ascension, one must transcend the human limitation of "doubt." The last line of the poem contrasts “half-gods” and “gods." The path of love rises above the limitations of time, where “half-gods” abide, allowing the individual to witness the presence of real "gods" in the eternal realm.

SONNET 29 William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries
And look upon myself and curse my fate, 4
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope, 7
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate; 12
For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

Shakespeare's Sonnets 29 and 30 have the typical structure of three quatrains (stanzas) and a couplet. The first stanza of Sonnet 29 concerns itself with the speaker's feeling of isolation that forces him to turn inward where he cries towards heaven and curses his fate. The second stanza is presented as an explanation for the speaker's loneliness, and becomes a list of what he envies: those who are "rich in hope," those "with friends possessed," someone's "art" and another man's "scope." Someone's "art" may refer to his knowledge, abilities, or skill; a man's "scope" can be interpreted as freedom or range of understanding. In the third quatrain, Shakespeare uses figurative language to illustrate the person's change in emotional state as he is lifted from despair "Like to the lark at break of day arising [who] from sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate" when "Haply [he] think[s] on thee." The metaphor of the lark rising from the earth (line 6) up to heaven conveys that the speaker is glorifying his earthly divinity having transcended his earth bound condition and ascended to "heaven's gate." The poet has resolved all doubts and has come to a new position of self-certainty.

AUGURIES OF INNOCENCE William Blake (1757–1827)

**To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour. 5**

**We are led to believe a lie 125
When we see not thro' the eye,
Which was born in a night to perish in a night,
When the soul slept in beams of light.
God appears, and God is light,
To those poor souls who dwell in night; 130
But does a human form display
To those who dwell in realms of day. (cf. Appendix B)**

William Blake wrote "Auguries of Innocence" in 1803, but it was not published until 1863 in the companion volume to Alexander Gilchrist's biography of the author. "Auguries" means omens or divinations. "Innocence," according to the subtitle of Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1794), is one of the two contrary states of the human soul. In Blake's poetry, innocence is related to existence in paradise and is associated with childhood (Bentley 230). Thus the title of "Auguries of Innocence" suggests that the poem will present omens from an innocent perspective. Except for the first four of 132 lines, "Auguries of Innocence" consists of a series of couplets, each containing an aphorism, all of which are thematically unrelated: each couplet can be removed from the context of the rest of the poem and examined for its individual content. A conceptual coherence emerges upon reading the first 4 lines and the last 6 lines of the poem. "Auguries of Innocence" begins with four alternately rhymed lines in which one can "see a World in a Grain of Sand," and Eternity can be contained "in an hour." The poem's last six lines describe two ways of seeing: with the eyes and through the eyes. Seeing with the eyes leads the percipient to a mistaken faith in the visible universe, but

by seeing through the eyes, with imaginative vision rather than physical sight, the percipient can break through the physical world and escape its “Night.” To those who dwell in this night of visible perception, “God appears and God is Light,” but to the visionaries “who Dwell in Realms of day,” God “does a Human Form Display”; God displays his human form to those who can correctly perceive Him—emanating from oneself. As in the opening quatrain of the poem, the infinite is represented by the particular: God can be visualized in human form just as the world can be seen in a grain of sand or heaven in a wildflower. In essence, “Auguries of Innocence” is a message of transcendence. Blake suggests that one must perceptually transcend the illusory nature of the physical universe in order see the infinite in everything.

NARRATIVE

Within the narrative of *Bartleby* the musical drama, the intertexts form part of the dialogue between Bartleby and his employer as well as part of Bartleby's sung soliloquy. I use the term “soliloquy” because the original texts are, in essence, dramatic monologues that function to disclose Bartleby's subjective state. Each appearance of an intertext is facilitated by the narrator directly or indirectly (rhetorically) asking Bartleby a question and is followed by Bartleby's intertextual response. I altered the poems using five techniques: 1) truncation, 2) omission, 3) re-ordering 4) variation and 5) mixture.

The first point of insertion follows the lawyer's request that Bartleby examine the accuracy of his own copies against the original document, to which Bartleby responds: "I prefer not to." Having become increasingly agitated with Bartleby's passive refusal, the lawyer attempts to reason with Bartleby in the following dialogue. "These are your own copies we are about to examine. Is it not labor saving to you? Is it not so? Will you not

speaking? Answer?" It is at this point in the narrative that Bartleby provides a relatively substantial answer beyond what the lawyer's "own astonished eyes saw of him." A seminal moment, Bartleby answers singing text from William Shakespeare's Sonnet 30:

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past, 2
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waist. 4
Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night, 6
And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd woe,
And moan the'expense of many a vanish'd sight; 8

Bartleby sings a truncated version of the sonnet consisting of the first eight lines (or two quatrains) of the poem. My appropriation of these lines is a means through which Bartleby discloses his emotional state. For example, the "silent thought" that the persona of the sonnet is described as "sweet," even though those events that he is reminiscing about are unfavorable. Further, the sonnet's illustrative power and main subject—evocation of things loved and lost—narratively functions to expand Bartleby's character by providing him with an emotional past and a personal history comprised of connections to people, places and events.

The imagery of the sonnet's first quatrain presents Bartleby in a state of recollection, remembrance and contemplation; and with the strength of past sorrows freshly felt, he grieves the squandering of precious time. His reflection reveals his grief and disappointment over time and effort wasted in search of the unattained. Bartleby reflects upon his past experiences and grieves over "many a thing" he "sought" and did not find, and "with old woes new wail[s]" his "dear time's waste." The second stanza reveals that Bartleby has a physical and emotional past connected to people, places and events that have shaped him. The experience of joy expressed in the sonnet's ending

couplet is absent from Bartleby's sung text and leaves the character lingering in a contemplative state of accepted sorrow and regret. Yet, as a result of his choices, he accepts life's circumstances.

The song "Give All" is an example of five techniques of intertextual construction. The sources are indicated below by the following typefaces: *Emerson*, Pausina, **Shakespeare**, **Blake**.

*Give all to love;
Obey thy heart;
Friends, Kindred, days,
Estate, good-fame,
Plans, credit and the Muse,—
Nothing refuse. 6*

In the above first stanza (lines 1-6), the audience is advised to "obey" the heart because it represents the faculty that understands the language of love. Bartleby urges the audience to submit to love with an open mind, refusing nothing within one's entire reality of individual experience: relationships with friends and relatives, the turn of events, ownership of property, recognition and renown, plans for the future, and encouraging sources of inspiration.

Seen below, in the opening line of the second stanza, Bartleby emphasizes the sovereignty of love as Providence in one's life. "Leave all for love" is a reminder to pursue the ascending path with "One word more" of caution, which requires "firm endeavor" in preserving the autonomy of an individual.

*Leave all for Love;
Yet, hear me, yet,
One word more thy heart behoved.
One pulse more of firm endeavor,—
Keep the to-day,
To-morrow, forever. 13*

The third stanza (lines 14-19) is an example of omission and re-ordering, in which Bartleby proclaims "Heartily know, when half-gods go, The gods arrive," followed by "But it is a god, Knows it's own path And the outlets of the sky."

Heartily know, 14
When half-gods go,
The gods arrive;
But it is a god,
Knows its own path
And the outlets of the sky 19

The original meaning of the passage is retained from Emerson's poem. Emerson and Bartleby both assert the authority of love by equating it with the infinite essence of a god who "Knows its own path" (18) and the "outlets of the sky." (19) Bartleby further insinuates that, as result of a person's surrendering to the authority of love as one's guiding principle, an individual's externalization of misguiding false gods is replaced by the arrival of the true "gods." When a person does not obey one's heart and does not give and leave all to love, their field of vision is clouded by half-gods. Yet when their heart is obeyed and love reigns, the clarity of the true god within arrives and illuminates a person's unique path. The "path" represents both the natural and the spiritual journey of an individual. This transcendent "path" is a manifestation of love equaling God's universal wisdom. Bartleby embodies Emerson's concept of God in relation to man.

The height, the deity of man is, to be self-sustained, to need no gift, no foreign force. Everything real is self-existent. Everything divine shares the self-existence of Deity. All that you call the world is the shadow of that substance which you are, the perpetual creation of the power of thought, of those that are dependent and of those that are independent of your will. (Emerson 100)

The end of the aria's third stanza exposes Bartleby as an omniscient being, revealing himself as Emerson's "deity of man." From this perspective, he sings the aria's climax:

For those who's sky is darkened at an early age,	21-variation and truncation
[From] desiring this man's art and that man's scope,	22 -omission and variation
<i>[with] untold intent they shall return,</i>	23 -re-ordering (abstraction)
and from earth sing at heavens gate;	24 -(abstraction) and omission
still lit, they've found a path displayed	25 -variation
to those who dwell in realms of day	26 -re-ordering
But does a human form display	27 -truncation
To those who dwell in realms of day.	28 -truncation

The above excerpt cumulatively contains all five techniques of inter-textual construction, indicated by line number. Appendix A lists the corresponding excerpts of the inter-textual sources. Here, Bartleby addresses the audience to sing to those who experience grief as a result of losing sight of their individual path through "desiring this man's art and that man's scope." (22) The wisdom of love will guide one out of darkness and "with untold intent they shall return" (23) to their transcendent path. This resonates with Emerson's caveat from his essay "Self-Reliance" when he writes:

Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only extemporaneous, half possession. That which each can do best, none but his Maker can teach him. No man yet knows what it is, nor can, till that person has exhibited it. Where is the master that could have taught Shakespeare? (Emerson 133)

CONCLUSION

I have discussed above the compositional process and structure of *Bartleby* the melodrama, and treatment of the constructed and interpolated texts. When considering the scope of Bartleby's statements, "I would prefer to be left alone here" (128) to "I know where I am" (141) it appears as if he is defending a wholly interior world. To establish Bartleby's voice and give expression to his interior world, I integrated the work of other authors into *Bartleby*, with the purpose of expanding Melville's title character. The addition of these literary sources has not only added complexity and enriched the character of Bartleby, his engagement with other notable literary texts places him within a larger literary canon: that of his contemporaries (Emerson) and their common influences (Shakespeare).

My interpretation is that Bartleby's silence is an expression of individual will, a will whose preference "not to" reflects quiet desperation and whose presence causes the lawyer to "penetrate to the predestined purpose of [the lawyer's] life" (135). For dramatic effect, the borrowed material provides Bartleby with a personal history comprised of emotional connections to people, places and events. His established character and new exterior voice enabled me to express my interpretation of Melville's character.

Bartleby focuses on Melville's title character rather than that of the nameless lawyer. For the purpose of bringing the character Bartleby further into focus and to give outer expression to his inner world, I bestow on him alone a singing voice. Furthermore, by means of intertextual construction, Bartleby's new exterior voice made possible composition of an alternative ending to Melville's tale, suggested by his final statement, "I know where I am," offering a thematic solution in which Bartleby surrenders to the

authority of love as one's guiding principle. In summary, the crux of *Bartleby's* compositional singularity is the addition of an expanded voice to a notoriously mysterious character, in order to provide new depth and a new perspective to a perplexing literary character.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Pausina, "Sonnet No.1"

For those who find the winter of their life **at an early age**,
spring can not come soon enough, in fear their light might fade.
But when the seasons change, and light endures
They find **a path, still lit**, to follow every day. 4

Shakespeare, "Sonnet No. 29", Second & Third Quatrain

Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd,
[From] Desiring this man's art and that man's scope, 7
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate; 12

Emerson, "Give All to Love", Stanzas Two & Three

'T is a brave master;
Let it have scope:
Follow it utterly,
Hope beyond hope:
High and more high
It dives into noon,
With wing unspent,
Untold intent; 14
But it is a god,
Knows its own path
And the outlets of the sky.
It was never for the mean;
It requireth courage stout.
Souls above doubt,
Valor unbending,
It will reward,—
They shall return 23
More than they were,

Blake, "Auguries of Innocence", Lines 129-132

God appears, and God is light,
To those poor souls who dwell in night;
But does a human form display 131
To those who dwell in realms of day. 132

APPENDIX B

AUGURIES OF INNOCENCE William Blake

To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower,
infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour.

A robin redbreast in a cage
Puts all heaven in a rage.

A dove-house fill'd with doves and pigeons
Shudders hell thro' all its regions.
A dog starv'd at his master's gate
Predicts the ruin of the state.

A horse misused upon the road
Calls to heaven for human blood.
Each outcry of the hunted hare
A fiber from the brain does tear.

A skylark wounded in the wing,
A cherubim does cease to sing.
The game-cock clipped and arm'd for fight
Does the rising sun affright.

Every wolf's and lion's howl
Raises from hell a human soul.

The wild deer, wand'ring here and there,
Keeps the human soul from care.
The lamb misus'd breeds public strife,
And yet forgives the butcher's knife.

The bat that flits at close of eve
Has left the brain that won't believe.
The owl that calls upon the night
Speaks the unbeliever's fright.

He who shall hurt the little wren
Shall never be belov'd by men.
He who the ox to wrath has mov'd
Shall never be by woman lov'd.

The wanton boy that kills the fly
Shall feel the spider's enmity.
He who torments the chafer's sprite
Weaves a bower in endless night.

The caterpillar on the leaf
Repeats to thee thy mother's grief.
Kill not the moth nor butterfly,
For the last judgment draweth nigh.

He who shall train the horse to war
Shall never pass the polar bar.
The beggar's dog and widow's cat,
Feed them and thou wilt grow fat.

The gnat that sings his summer's song
Poison gets from slander's tongue.
The poison of the snake and newt
Is the sweat of envy's foot.

The poison of the honey bee
Is the artist's jealousy.

The prince's robes and beggar's rags
Are toadstools on the miser's bags.
A truth that's told with bad intent
Beats all the lies you can invent.

It is right it should be so;
Man was made for joy and woe;
And when this we rightly know,
Thro' the world we safely go.

Joy and woe are woven fine,
A clothing for the soul divine.
Under every grief and pine
Runs a joy with silken twine.

The babe is more than swaddling bands;
Every farmer understands.
Every tear from every eye
Becomes a babe in eternity;

This is caught by females bright,
And return'd to its own delight.
The bleat, the bark, bellow, and roar,
Are waves that beat on heaven's shore.

The babe that weeps the rod beneath
Writes revenge in realms of death.
The beggar's rags, fluttering in air,
Does to rags the heavens tear.

The soldier, arm'd with sword and gun,
Palsied strikes the summer's sun.
The poor man's farthing is worth more
Than all the gold on Afric's shore.
One mite wrung from the laborer's hands
Shall buy and sell the miser's lands;

Or, if protected from on high,
Does that whole nation sell and buy.

He who mocks the infant's faith
Shall be mock'd in age and death.
He who shall teach the child to doubt
The rotting grave shall never get out.

He who respects the infant's faith
Triumphs over hell and death.
The child's toys and the old man's reasons
Are the fruits of the two seasons.

The questioner, who sits so sly,
Shall never know how to reply.
He who replies to words of doubt
Doth put the light of knowledge out.

The strongest poison ever known
Came from Caesar's laurel crown.
Nought can deform the human race
Like to the armor's iron brace.

When gold and gems adorn the plow,
To peaceful arts shall envy bow.
A riddle, or the cricket's cry,
Is to doubt a fit reply.

The emmet's inch and eagle's mile
Make lame philosophy to smile.
He who doubts from what he sees
Will never believe, do what you please.

If the sun and moon should doubt,
They'd immediately go out.
To be in a passion you good may do,
But no good if a passion is in you.

The whore and gambler, by the state
Licensed, build that nation's fate.
The harlot's cry from street to street
Shall weave old England's winding-sheet.

The winner's shout, the loser's curse,
Dance before dead England's hearse.

Every night and every morn
Some to misery are born,
Every morn and every night
Some are born to sweet delight.

Some are born to sweet delight,
Some are born to endless night.

We are led to believe a lie
When we see not thro' the eye,
Which was born in a night to perish in a night,
When the soul slept in beams of light.

God appears, and God is light,
To those poor souls who dwell in night;
But does a human form display
To those who dwell in realms of day.

APPENDIX C

Scene. A lawyers office at NO. ___ Wall Street.

Lawyer. I am rather an elderly man. The nature of my avocations has brought me into contact with a rather singular set of men. I mean the scriveners. I could relate rather diverse histories. But I waive the stories of all other scriveners for a few passages in the life of Bartleby, who was a scrivener, the strangest I ever saw. No materials exist for a full biography of this man. What my own astonished eyes saw of Bartleby, that is all I know of him.

I am, one of those unambitious lawyers, who in the cool tranquility of a snug retreat, do a snug business among rich men's bonds, mortgages, and title-deeds.

My original business was increased. In answer to my advertisement, for additional help, one morning a motionless young man stood upon my office threshold. It was Bartleby—pallidly neat, pitably respectable, incurably forlorn!

At first, he seemed to gorge himself on my documents. As if long famishing for something to copy, he wrote on silently, palely, mechanically. It was on the third day, I think, of his being with me, a much hurried necessity arose to complete a small affair I had in hand...

Lawyer. Bartleby! Come Here (stern)!

Bartleby. I would prefer not to (gently).

Lawyer. Bartleby! Come Here (stunned)!

Bartleby. I would prefer not to.

Lawyer. Prefer not to. What do you mean (excitedly)?

Bartleby. I would prefer not to.

Lawyer. Bartleby! quick, I am waiting (agitated).

Bartleby. What is wanted (mildly)?

Lawyer. The copies, the copies! We are going to examine them!

Bartleby. I would prefer not to.

Lawyer. Why do you refuse (bewildered)? These are your own copies we are about to examine! Is it not labor saving to you,? Is it not so? Will you

not speak? Answer!

Bartleby. (sung)
When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste; time's waste-
Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd woe, And moan
the expense of many a vanish'd sight.

Lawyer. Bartleby, when those papers are all copied I will compare them with you.

Ensemble—Lawyer & Clerks

Lawyer Bartleby ? Bartleby (shouting)! Every copyist is bound to help examine his own copy. What do you think of this (annoyed—to Clerks)?

{ Lawyer singing Am I not right? I am!
Clerk 1. With submission sir, I think that you are.

Clerk 2. I think you should kick him out of the office (grit-tingly)

Lawyer singing You hear what they say? Come forth and do your duty!

{ Clerk 1. I think I'll just step behind his screen and black his...(aside, hostile)
Lawyer Sit down!

Clerk 2. Prefer not, eh ? I'd give him preferences...(bitterly angry)

Lawyer I'd prefer that you would withdraw for the present (to clerk 2).

Clerk 1. But sir, if he would but prefer...

Lawyer You will please withdraw (to clerk 1).

Clerk 1. Oh, certainly sir, if you prefer that I should (submissively).

Lawyer. You are decided, then, not to comply with my request (to Bartleby)

Bartleby. I would prefer not to.

Lawyer. You will not?

Bartleby. I prefer not.

Lawyer. Then, the time has come; you must quit this place; I am sorry for you; but you must go.

Bartleby. I would prefer not to quit you.

Lawyer. You must!

Lawyer. Then, one of two things must take place. Either you must do something or something must be done to you. Now, what sort of business would you like to engage in? Would you like to re-engage in copying for someone else (snidely)?

Bartleby. I would prefer not to.

Lawyer. Would you like to travel through the country collecting bills for merchants?

Bartleby. I would prefer not to.

Lawyer. Would you like to travel, as a companion, entertaining someone with your conversation?

Bartleby. I would prefer not to.

Lawyer. Would you like a clerkship in a dry-goods store?

Bartleby. I would prefer not to.

Lawyer. Stationary you shall be then! If you do not go away from these premises before night...(very angry)
You must leave these premises before night. Good-bye Bartleby, I am going and may God, in some way, bless you.

Lawyer exit.

Bartleby. (sung)
I would prefer, not to make any change, no—
I would not like a clerkship.
But I am not particular.
I would prefer not to take a clerkship.
I would not like it at all;
though, as I said before,
I am not particular.

The next morning

Lawyer. Bartleby, please come here? I am not going to ask you to do anything you would prefer not to do. I simply wish to speak with you. Will you tell me, Bartleby, When you were born?

Bartleby. I would prefer not to.

Lawyer. Will you tell me anything about yourself?

Bartleby. I am billeted upon you for the purpose of an all wise Providence.

Lawyer. Is that why you prefer a window without a view?

Bartleby. But It is a god knows its own path, and the outlets of the sky.

Lawyer. Therefore, you will resume copying ?

Bartleby. I have given up copying.

Lawyer. I implore you, what is the reason?

Bartleby. Do you not see the reason for yourself?

Bartleby. (sung)

Give all to love;
 Obey thy heart;
 Friends, Kindred, days,
 Estate, good-fame,
 Plans, credit and the Muse,
 Nothing refuse.
 Leave all for Love;
 Yet, hear me, yet,
 One word more thy heart behoved.
 One pulse more of firm endeavor,
 Keep the to-day,
 Tomorrow, forever,
 Heartily know,
 When half-gods go,
 The gods arrive.
 But it is a god,
 Knows its own path
 And the outlets of the sky.
 For those who's sky is darkened at an early age,
 From desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
 with untold intent they shall return,
 and from earth sing at heavens gate;
 still lit, they've found a path displayed
 to those who dwell in realms of day
 But does a human form display
 To those who dwell in realms of day

At the Tombs

Lawyer. Bartleby (gently)?

Bartleby. I know you.

Lawyer. It was not I that brought you here, and to you, this should not be so vile a place. See, it is not so sad a place as one might think. Look, there is the sky, and here is the grass.

Bartleby To see the world in a grain of sand, and a heaven in a wild flower,
to hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour.

I know where I am.

Lights fade to black

End